

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A composite multilayer material, in particular for plain bearings or bushings, having a backing layer, a bearing metal layer of a copper alloy or an aluminum alloy, an intermediate layer and an overlay, wherein the overlay consists of about 0 - 20 wt.% of at least one of copper or silver, the rest being tin, and said intermediate layer being a single layer of nickel in direct contact with said bearing metal layer and said overlay for diffusion of a portion of said single layer of nickel of said intermediate layer directly into said overlay and forming an initially absent tin-nickel layer between a remaining portion of said single layer of nickel and said overlay, the layer thickness of the intermediate nickel layer being greater than 4 μm as applied to said bearing metal layer to prevent full diffusion of said intermediate layer into said overlay.
2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the overlay comprises at least 0.5 - 20 wt.% of at least one of copper or silver.
3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the overlay consists of about 2 - 8 wt.% of at least one of copper or silver, the rest being tin.
4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the layer thickness of the overlay is about 5 - 25 μm .
5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the layer thickness of the overlay is about 6 - 14 μm .
6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the layer thickness of the nickel layer is about 6 μm - 8 μm as applied to said bearing metal layer.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bearing metal layer comprises at least one of copper-aluminum, copper-tin, copper-tin-lead, copper-zinc, copper-zinc-silicon, copper-zinc-aluminum, aluminum-zinc or copper-aluminum-iron alloy.

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The composite multilayer material as claimed in claim 1, which has undergone an aging process and comprises an interdiffusion layer of substantially tin and nickel between the nickel intermediate layer and the overlay.

Claims 9 and 10 (CANCELLED)

11. (NEW) A method of forming a tin-nickel layer in a composite multilayer material, in particular for plain bearings or bushings, having a backing layer, a bearing metal layer of a copper alloy or an aluminum alloy, a single intermediate layer of nickel having a thickness greater than $4\mu\text{m}$ in contact with an overlay and said bearing metal layer, wherein the overlay comprises about 0 - 20 wt.% of at least one of copper or silver, the rest being tin, comprising:

diffusing of a portion of said single layer of nickel of said intermediate layer directly into said overlay and forming an initially absent tin-nickel layer between a remaining portion of said single layer of nickel and said overlay.

12. (NEW) A method of constructing a composite multilayer material, in particular for plain bearings or bushings, comprising:

providing a backing layer;

disposing a bearing metal layer of a copper alloy or an aluminum alloy on said backing layer;

disposing an intermediate layer of nickel having a thickness greater than $4\mu\text{m}$ directly on said bearing metal layer; and

disposing an overlay comprising about 0 - 20 wt.% of at least one of copper or silver, the rest being tin, directly on said intermediate layer.